

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 09-07-06)

4,988
Shipments received since opening

41,353
Cubic meters of waste disposed

82,173
Containers disposed in the underground



Martin earns Microsoft certification

Debbie Martin (NCI) recently earned the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) Server 2003: Security+ credential. The certification is for professionals who analyze business requirements, and design and implement the infrastructure for business solutions based on the Microsoft Windows® 2003 platform and Microsoft server software.

The MCSE 2003 credential is one of the most widely recognized technical certifications in the industry. By earning the premier MCSE credential, Martin has demonstrated the skills necessary to lead organizations in the successful design, implementation and administration of the most advanced Microsoft Windows platform and Microsoft server products.

To earn the certification, Martin was required to pass seven exams, which she took at a testing center in Lubbock, TX. She has worked at WIPP for 18 years and is currently a senior member of the NCI Technical Support Team.

Panel 5 mining underway



Photo: Melody Smith (WTS)

For the first time, underground mining has begun on the west side of the main drifts. It is the fifth of eight planned disposal panels, with four panels on the east side of the drifts and four panels on the west. Panels 1-4 on the east side have already been mined. Panel 1 and 2 are filled and disposal operations are taking place in Panel 3.

Bob Kirby, manager for underground operations, said, "Disposal in Room 3 of Panel 3 was recently completed and emplacement in Room 2 has started. Panel 3 is estimated to be completely full January 20, 2007."



Photo: Melody Smith (WTS)

The plan is to begin using Panel 4 for RH TRU waste disposal. "We hope to begin RH waste emplacement in Panel 4 in the coming months, depending on permit approvals and waste shipment," Kirby added. "RH waste receipt is driving our just-in-time mining schedule for the 2007 and 2008 time frames."

The schedule for mining underground panels is continuous, moving from one panel to the next as needed. Kirby said the mining rates are based on the waste receipt schedule set by DOE.

Mining Panel 5 on the west side will require some changes to the ventilation system. Jill Farnsworth, cognizant ventilation engineer, said the quality of airflow underground will be the same, but bulkheads and ventilation control devices for the ventilation circuit will have to be repositioned.

Panel 5 is expected to be complete in about 18 months.

Goff assumes new role

Tom Goff (WTS) has been appointed as radiological control manager. He will be responsible for coordinating activities involving radiological control for both contact- and remote-handled waste.

Goff has extensive operations and radiation protection experience in both the naval and commercial nuclear power programs and DOE waste management and D&D sites. For the past 17 years he has been involved in radiation safety roles both at WIPP and at Rocky Flats. He holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland, is registered by the National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists and is certified by the American Board of Health Physics.

What's in a name?

Did you know that WIPP wasn't always called WIPP? Before the project was moved to southeast New Mexico, it was originally planned for Lyons, Kansas, where it was called the Bedded Salt Pilot Plant. The experiments conducted in Kansas were called Project Salt Vault.

The project was renamed the Radioactive Waste Disposal Pilot Plant when it was planned for New Mexico.

According to retired SNL scientist, Wendell Weart, and retired WTS employee, Eddie Lyons, the DOE adopted the name, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, in late 1975.

"I was pretty upset," says Weart. "I had a lot of viewgraphs with RWDPP on them!"

Remote-Handled Waste Series

RH TRU waste's final destination

For more than seven years, waste handling technicians have been stacking contact-handled (CH) TRU waste in WIPP's deep underground disposal rooms to permanently isolate it from the accessible environment. Soon the DOE plans to bring the project mission full circle under a proposed new permit that would allow the disposal of remote-handled (RH) TRU waste.



Disposal and waste handling processes for RH TRU waste will differ from those used for CH TRU waste, but are based on the same ALARA principles used to protect workers and minimize exposure. The more penetrating radiation in RH TRU wastes will require it to be shielded and handled remotely.

Arrival

RH waste will arrive at WIPP primarily in the RH-72B shipping cask and, less often, the CNS 10-160B. The RH transport trailer and shipping cask will be brought into the RH Bay through an airlock. CH TRU waste shipping containers are off-loaded from the trailer outside the Waste Handling Building before being moved through the airlocks into the CH Bay.

Waste Handling

All RH TRU waste handling at WIPP will be done remotely by machines or robotics. If RH waste arrives in an RH-72B, the waste will be inside a cylindrical facility canister. The facility canister will hold up to three 55-gallon-drums of waste or can be direct loaded. After numerous radiological checks to ensure the absence of external contamination, the canister is loaded into a facility cask for the descent to the underground disposal room.

If the RH waste arrives in a CNS 10-160B, the process is somewhat different. The 10-160B holds up to ten 55-gallon drums. The drums must be removed inside a hot cell and transferred into a facility canister for final disposal. Like the RH 72-B process, the facility canister is loaded into a facility cask and taken by the waste hoist to the underground.

Disposal

Underground, a 41-ton forklift will move the lead-lined cask, which weighs 67,700 pounds empty, from the hoist to the disposal room.

Drums, standard waste boxes and other CH TRU waste containers are stacked in the disposal room drifts. RH TRU waste, however, will be disposed in horizontal boreholes drilled into the walls at eight-foot intervals. The facility cask will be placed on the Horizontal Emplacement and Retrieval Equipment (HERE) that is aligned

with a pre-drilled borehole. Next, the HERE will push the facility canister out of the facility cask and into the borehole and then insert a concrete shield plug into the borehole to protect workers.

Containment

Approximately four percent of the total volume of waste to be disposed at WIPP will be RH TRU. Although RH TRU waste is a small portion of the waste volume, its disposal is essential to cleanup of the U.S. weapons complex.

The Environmental Protection Agency has certified that the WIPP repository will safely contain the radioactive elements of the CH and RH TRU waste for a 10,000-year regulatory period. The relatively rapid decay of RH TRU beta and gamma radionuclides will render levels of radioactivity similar to those of CH TRU waste within about 200 years.

Property Management completes FY06 wall-to-wall inventory

Property Management has completed the FY06 wall-to-wall inventory with outstanding results. We were able to locate 99.99 percent of the value of WIPP's tagged property and 99.89 percent of the total number of items we had to find. We were unable to locate three items.

Property wishes to thank those individuals who helped to make our inventory successful – AGAIN!

A special thank you to Lois George and Jerry Bennett of the Property Group!

**Submitted by Ann Morissette,
Team Leader, Property
Management**

RH Operational Readiness Review successfully passed

WTS successfully PASSED the contractor operational readiness review (ORR). The ORR started on August 25 and worked through the weekend with document reviews and interviews. It continued through the week with four days of demonstrations, responses to abnormal activities and a drill. The ORR concluded on September 1.

The Washington Group International ORR team recognized the readiness of the RH operations team as a strong area and the operational procedures as some of the best they have seen at an ORR. The team identified only 11 minor findings and left several excellent observations for the RH team to evaluate and improve upon. Later, DOE will complete its own ORR.

This is a huge milestone as we get closer to accepting RH waste at WIPP. I am very proud of the team effort that got us to this point. My thanks extends beyond organizational boundaries to the entire WIPP project. Congratulations to everyone on the WIPP team!

**Scott Anderson
WTS Operations Manager**

The following photos were taken during the integrated facility checkout, which preceded the ORR.



The RH-72B cask will be used for most shipments of RH TRU waste to WIPP. In this photo, the cask is upright, but arrives at WIPP horizontally on a trailer with round impact limiters on each end.

The CNS 10-160B cask sits inside the Remote-Handled (RH) Bay without the upper and lower impact limiters that are used during shipping. The cask will eventually be used to ship RH TRU waste to WIPP.



In Memoriam: John Catano

WIPP mourns the loss of John Catano, who passed away Monday, August 21, 2006, in Hobbs, N.M. John became part of the WTS team in August 1989, when he was hired as an Emergency Services Technician at the WIPP.

We extend our condolences to John's family and friends.

Interested in WIPP?

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an e-mail message to TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

Workplace safety: Avoiding hazards at the office

Any injury at WIPP is one too many. Regardless of whether we work above or below ground, safety is part of our job. Generally people understand that there are potential hazards in industrial settings, but fewer people recognize the potential risks found in everyday office environments.

Office work can lead to injuries if appropriate safe work practices are not followed. Learn to avoid these common hazards:

Musculoskeletal strains and sprains associated with material handling

- ⌘ If you must carry something, make sure the object is carried in a way that avoids blocking your vision
- ⌘ Never lift objects that are too heavy to handle comfortably. Get help, or use a hand truck when moving heavy or large objects
- ⌘ Lift objects from the floor correctly by using proper lifting mechanics--hold the load close to your body and bend with your knees, not your back

Stress and strain associated with sitting and computer use

- ⌘ Arrange your desk or work station so that your arms, wrists, legs, back and neck can be maintained in a comfortable "neutral" position, with proper back support
- ⌘ Those who spend long hours at a computer should consider mastering keyboard moves, instead of relying principally on the mouse. This helps reduce strain on your elbow and shoulder
- ⌘ Take rest breaks

Injuries that result from slips, trips and falls

- ⌘ Never run in the office
- ⌘ If liquids are spilled on tile or linoleum floors, clean them up immediately
- ⌘ Do not lay electrical cords or phone cords where they could create a tripping hazard
- ⌘ Keep aisles clear of stored items

Happy Birthday Wishes!

Art Chavez (WRES)
September 1

Dennis Boyea (WTS)
September 5

Sue Bradley (WTS)
September 5

Diana Murray (WTS)
September 7

Tom Fabian (WTS)
September 9

Priscilla Ridenour (WTS)
September 9

Ava Holland (CBFO)
September 10

Gloria Sena (CBFO)
September 10

Cindi Becker (CTAC)
September 11

Mike Knowles (WTS)
September 12

Helen Pettus (WTS)
September 16

Is your birthday on our list?

Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at:
TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

Hand injuries from cuts, scrapes, smashes and punctures

- ⌘ Use a letter opener when opening envelopes and boxes, and a staple puller when removing staples from documents
- ⌘ Wear a rubber finger "cot" when fingering through a significant amount of envelopes or pieces of paper
- ⌘ Store sharp objects inside closed containers
- ⌘ Always close desk and file cabinet drawers

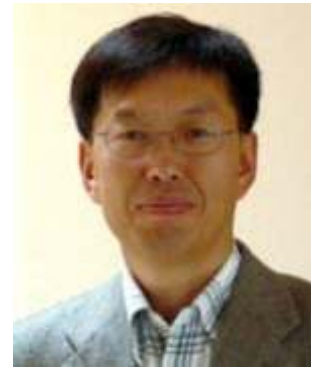
Although offices are not considered to be high hazard work environments, injuries happen when risks are not controlled or when people get careless. Practice safe work habits at all times.

Based on information from ToolboxTopics.com

Lee new performance assessment manager

Moo Y. Lee is the new manager of the Performance Assessment Department at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Carlsbad Programs Group.

Lee has been with SNL since 1995. His areas of expertise include mining engineering, international program development, radioactive waste disposal and nuclear nonproliferation. He also has experience with performance assessment models at WIPP and nuclear weapons test programs.



Previously, Lee worked in Albuquerque for several departments, including Yucca Mountain Project and geomechanics. He received the 2004 Lockheed Martin Nova Award as part of the Space Shuttle Columbia Accident Investigation Team and the NASA Group Achievement Award in 2004 for participation in the Aerothermodynamics Team STS-107 Investigation Support. He has authored numerous publications.

Lee has a doctorate and masters degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in mining engineering/rock mechanics and a bachelor's degree in mineral and petroleum engineering from Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea. He and his wife, Myung, have two children in college.

"We're very excited to experience life in a different part of New Mexico," says Lee.

Submitted by **Sandia National Laboratories**

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws

